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ABSTRACT

An early education program for preschool and elementary age migrant children up through third grade, the program operates year-round sites at Connell and Moses Lake, Washington and at La Grulla, Texas designed to meet the needs of bilingual migrant children. The program aims to overcome the need for some continuity in the child's educational experience. A mobile component of the Texas site operates from April through October in temporary locations as the children move to northern work sites in the migrant stream. The program consists of five components: instruction, training, community-parent involvement, materials development, and management. Curriculum materials which can be taught effectively by migrant adults with limited academic background and no previous teaching experience have been adapted. These curriculum materials can be individualized so that a child can proceed at his own pace dictated in part by the interruptions that go with the occupational needs of migrant parents. The paraprofessional teachers function as teachers working directly with children with only limited supervision by professional staff. The mid-year evaluation indicates that the program will be meeting most of its objectives during the 1977-78 program year. This report presents the mid-year progress report in two parts. Part I gives an historical perspective: the evolution of the program from the original need to the development of the curriculum and training model. Part II reports on the current progress for each program component. (NQ)

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EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

TRAINING MIGRANT PARAPROFESSIONALS IN

BILINGUAL MINI HEAD START

Interim Evaluation

1977-78 Program Year

No. 12 in Series

Prepared by Beverly McConnell, Evaluator
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PROJECT TITLE: Training Migrant Paraprofessionals in Bilingual Mini Head Start

LOCATION: Year-round sites operate at Connell and at Moses Lake, Washington, and at Grulla, Texas.

A mobile component operates during the months of April through October. Most of the children and staff from the Grulla, Texas program move to northern work locations where the families do seasonal farm work. The program is continued in temporary locations along this northern work route.

(Temporary sites have included in previous years: Hoopeston, IL; Burley, ID; Umatilla, OR; Dayton, Walla Walla, Prescott, Pasco, Basin City, Kahlotus, Lynden, Mabton, Grandview, and Prosser, WA.)

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The cornerstone grant for the program is from Title VII, Bilingual Education, Office of Education.

Other Sources of Support in 1977-78:

Federal:

Title-I Migrant, USOE-ESEA federal funds, granted by Washington State Migrant Education office for facilities at Basin City and at Connell, Washington.

Office of Child Development, Migrant and Indian Division Head Start funds, administered by the Texas Migrant Council.

USOE--Developer/Demonstrator grant.

Department of Agriculture, USDA Food program.

Washington State:

Urban, Rural, Racial Disadvantaged (URRD) grant, Washington State funds, Office of Public Instruction.

Head Start Matching grant, Washington State funds.

Title XX Social Security Act, federal and state matching funds, administered by the Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State.

ADMINISTERING AGENCY: Sunnyside School District 201, Sunnyside, Washington.

PROGRAM START DATE: Fall 1971

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of all objectives in this program year calls for analysis of test results and presentation of other documentation of program progress only for the final evaluation. This leaves an open format for this mid-year evaluation to present progress in a narrative fashion. The following report therefore presents a progress report in two parts. Part One gives an historical perspective: the evolution of the program from the original need to the full development of the curriculum and training model. Part Two reports on progress in the current year for each of the program's components.

This program has been approved by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel of the Office of Education. It has also been designated a developer/demonstrator program in the National Diffusion Network. It is therefore in the process of disseminating educational products (curriculum, tests, training) to other sites with similar needs. Project evaluations are being used as a means of disseminating information about the program to general readers and other school districts, as well as a means of reporting to the funding agencies. It is hoped that the trial and error process described in Part One: The Evolution of the Program Model will be particularly helpful to the general reader previously unacquainted with the program.

PART ONE

EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM MODEL

The Need of Migrant Children for Continuity

Training Migrant Paraprofessionals is an early education program for preschool and elementary age children up through third grade. It was developed in response to a special "request for programs" issued by the Division of Bilingual Education in 1971. This request was issued asking districts to design a program uniquely tailored to meeting the needs of bilingual children who are migrant farm workers' children. This was the only project selected for funding among those submitted in response to this challenge.

One of the primary needs special to migrant children which this program was designed to overcome was the need for some continuity in the child's educational experience. For children moving in the migrant stream many educational agencies attempt to provide services at each temporary site where the child may be part of the year. But in the past these services have always been uncoordinated and unrelated--which is especially hard on a child attempting to acquire beginning skills in academic subjects such as reading or math. At each changing site the approach and curriculum materials used is likely to be different. It is very easy for the child to miss basic concepts because of his moves and related absences, and, because each curriculum used may organize the sequence of lessons somewhat differently, the child may miss something vital because he leaves before it has been taken up at one site and after it has already been covered at the next site.

For the child whose family is making the transition out of the migrant stream there is almost as much instability affecting their educational experience. Because farm work is seasonal there

are frequent periods of unemployment. The "settling out" migrant families in Washington State are typically unemployed during December and January--sometimes more months during the winter. At these times the family frequently travels--returning to visit family or to look after property in Texas or Mexico--consolidating experses by living with relatives. These disruptions come right in the middle of the child's school year. Additionally migrant families move in and out of migrancy: one year they drop out and do not travel, the next year they move again.

A Program Design for Continuity

To meet this special need for continuity this program was designed to operate 12 months out of a year. In this way, despite interruptions in attendance a child has more of a chance of achieving the equivalent of a full academic year of instruction. The curriculum is sequenced and continuous from the preschool through the third grade level and can be taught on an individualized basis so that whatever pattern of attendance can be maintained by a child there are no gaps--the child picks up where he left off and continues. Taking into account the "vacation forgetting" phenomenon--children forgetting what they had learned and having to review and to some extent start over after an absence--the program has designed mastery tests for each curriculum which enable the teacher to quickly evaluate what concepts may be weak and in need of review. This pre-sequenced curriculum provides continuity from year to year and bridging absences in the year-round sites in Washington State and in Texas.

In addition, the program operates a "mobile" component. The program operates in the small town of La Grulla, Texas, which is almost totally settled by migrant families. The majority of houses are boarded up every spring as the population moves north away from almost total unemployment (95%) in Texas, to work in the northern states needing temporary workers. During "the season" families will earn the money to last them throughout the entire year. This program moves with these children, setting up

educational services in new locations all along the northern work route and eventually returning with the children to the home base community in the fall.

To accomplish this type of continuity a survey is done each year to see where families intend to move. When this survey shows a cluster of families moving to some area in the north, teachers are selected from adults in migrant families, or unattached adults who indicate a willingness to move to these areas. Intensive training is carried out throughout the winter home base period while the children are enrolled in Texas. When families move, teachers, trainers, and administrative staff also relocate. For school-age children a release time arrangement is usually worked out so that for an hour, or an hour and a half, the child is released from classes in the northern school to work with the teacher who has come with him/her from Texas. Sometimes the school-age program is conducted after school. It is designed to be a supplemental program focusing on reading (Spanish and English), math, and language instruction. Preschool children enroll in local day care centers if these exist, with the Texas teaching staff working for the local program with the agreement that part of the day the teacher may be assigned to continue teaching children we are following, using the bilingual curriculum. If no day care program exists the program sets one up and the bilingual curriculum is taught during the morning hours.

Past Efforts at Continuity for Migrant Children

The "mobile component" design grew out of two years of demonstration programs through which various program designs were used to follow children moving in the migrant stream. Most of these earlier efforts were only marginally successful. Colorado Migrant Council moved entire centers (capacity 20 to 40 children) from one state to another in the north and back to Texas. As the migrants drifted away from one location the center would move to the place where the majority were moving, then move again attempting to follow the majority. Since migrants scatter like quail in many different directions from each site this meant that the

program was picking up fewer and fewer of the original children with each move. The centers managed to serve other migrant children at each site but did not succeed in serving the same children at a series of sites very well (the continuity rate was under 20%). This is only a small improvement over the operation of entirely separate programs by local agencies.

Southwest Educational Laboratories also tried to move a center following children. They recruited professional teachers to move--and found that in order to get people willing to maintain a home in Texas and set up temporary homes in crowded and rural areas of the north that they had to pay very good salaries and various "hardship" bonuses--and even so had difficulty finding or keeping staff. This program only served the children it started out with at each move. It suffered the same kind of disintegration of service group that the Colorado Migrant Council program experienced--meaning that it served fewer and fewer children as the season wore on until the point was reached where staff very nearly outnumbered the children being served. The resultant program was very expensive.

Profiting from Previous Experiences

Learning from these types of experiences this program was designed to rely on the adults from migrant families as the teachers. These are the only adults in the life of a migrant child that do represent continuity from site to site. Because these adults are part of working families they usually can find housing offered by growers to workers they recruit. (Migrant farm workers go to rural areas with a small local population and tend to overwhelm all facilities, including housing, during the season when the population is swelled with temporary workers. Housing is therefore a serious problem for staff of any type of program following migrants from site to site.) Because this adult would in most cases be migrating anyway, the "hardship pay" levels needed to entice the professional staff used in the Southwest Lab program was not necessary. The program pays a flat relocation amount covering travel costs and per diem for a limited period

while the family finds housing at the new site. And the teaching adults have employment for all year which is an inducement that makes up for the fact that during the season they could frequently earn more by working in the fields.

The program is designed for maximum flexibility. As a supplemental program in most cases it doesn't need to or attempt to provide a full range of services to a child in northern locations--these are obtained from local agencies. This means that a complex staff filling different functions is not needed--one teacher can continue providing services to a cross-age group of children from three or four families who move to one location. Since the program can function in an operating unit as small as one teacher with a few children at a site it can scatter and move as the families do. As a result, in its first two years of operation the program was able to follow 75% of the children it started out with from Texas (compared to a maximum follow-up rate of 20% or less in previous program designs). During the northern phase the administrative and training staff work on an itinerant basis--visiting from site to site as needed. A monitoring system depends on weekly progress reports mailed to a central location.

Trial and Error in Evolving the Curriculum Model

Based on the transiency pattern of the migrant children to be served, and the previous experience of other programs related above, this program started out with two "givens." (1) It would use bilingual adults from migrant families as its teachers and find the type of curriculum and training that would enable them to be effective teachers. (2) It would individualize the curriculum and sequence it from a preschool level through the early grades so that whatever pattern of attendance was possible for a child, he/she could progress without gaps in the learning sequence--the kind of gaps that make such a shakey foundation for so many migrant children that all subsequent educational efforts are jeopardized by a poor beginning in basic skills.

Some false starts were made in the search for curriculum. The first effort relied on one-to-one tutoring. Teachers were given activities which children could use in independent play and trained how to introduce these activities and monitor them while working nearby in a one-to-one tutoring session with individual children taken serially from the group. The tutoring enabled necessary individualization, and children did make progress, but the pace was extremely slow because of the brief period with each child. This model gave way to one in which more small group instruction was used. At the beginning levels where children are most dependent on oral interaction, this requires continuous regrouping as new children come and go throughout the year but it provides a longer period of instruction for all children than was possible with complete individualization. When the children progress to an ability to use workbooks the teacher "floats"--catching each one at the start of a new concept presentation and leaving them to work independently while going on to the next.

Many people are reluctant to see structured lessons, particularly introducing academic subject matter, at the preschool level. In this program these structured lesson periods are short and alternate with child choice activity periods. So far as we can see the result is entirely beneficial--the children thrive on the change of pace. They readily accomplish pre-reading and math activities and show tremendous language growth through the combination of structured and informal language development.

The structured curriculum series selected have additional advantages. The teacher does not need to have the background of a curriculum writer--the sequencing of concepts from simple to complex is built into the materials. Frequently the teaching interaction is very explicit. It can therefore be managed effectively by adults who do not have previous experience or academic preparation for teaching. It is also much easier for the teacher to work with children who are at different levels in the curriculum when the lessons are fairly complete and do not require a great deal of extra materials and preparation on the part of the teacher. Frequently cross-age grouping is necessary with migrant

children. Additionally, the uneven attendance and interruptions typical of life of a migrant child mean that even children of the same age represent a wide divergence in their educational progress.

Trial and Error in Developing the Training Model

The training model also evolved from trial and error. The first year the program deliberately varied the approach--some teachers with an extended pre-service training before being assigned groups, and others who started almost immediately with groups and got most of their training on an in-service basis while teaching. The in-service was notably the more successful approach.

The project now uses an approach in which a new teacher may have a chance to team teach with a more experienced teacher for up to a week. A fast orientation is given during the week in all the curriculum subject areas, and from that point on the teacher works with a group. Training continues with presentations arranged in mid-day when preschool children are sleeping or when some consolidation of children under a few teachers frees other teachers for training activities.

At first the program training was on "general teaching skills" but evolved to training which was more and more focused on the curriculum materials to be used. The project found that teaching skills were picked up fastest (1) if they could be learned from imitation after watching a demonstration (2) the more specific the skills were to the actual teaching situation. The training approach therefore involves presentation and demonstration, with the trainer providing the model. The next step is informal observation of the trainee to check understanding, and step-in modeling if a skill needs further demonstration. Observation of actual teaching, with feedback conferences, provides objective evidence that the teaching skills can be demonstrated by the trainee. A checklist of the essential teaching skills provides a means of judging when the level of mastery is sufficient to consider a training unit "completed."

Conclusion

In conclusion the program model has selected and adapted curriculum materials which can be taught effectively by migrant adults with limited academic background and no previous experience in teaching. These curriculum materials can be individualized so that a child moving through them can proceed at his own pace dictated in part by the interruptions that go with the occupational needs of migrant parents. The training model is intensive, and focused on specific skills. It aims at a high level of competence by the paraprofessional teachers because they must function as teachers working directly with children with only limited supervision by professional staff. The model evolved through trial and error and adjustments were made based on continuous internal evaluation, particularly during the first two years. Changes are still being made, but the basic model has been in operation for almost five years. During this time project children have consistently demonstrated marked superiority over other migrant children who have had no program or who have been served by programs which have not been designed to provide continuity from year to year, or from site to site.

The use of teachers who are bilingual adults without professional training may be applicable to many other programs, not necessarily migrant. There is a great shortage of professional teachers who are bilingual. Rather than wait until this deficit can be filled, this program model offers a means of providing bilingual education through use of a readily available bilingual labor force--the parents of children who are to be served.

PART TWO

PROGRESS REPORT ON PROJECT COMPONENTS

Instructional Component

The progress to be reported in this area is the development of a project reading PRIMER for the children beginning Spanish reading. Entitled EMPEZANDO A LEER the Primer introduces about a dozen letter sounds in Spanish and teaches the children blending skills to enable them to sound out new words. The format used closely parallels the reading Primer used in English. It provides a bridge into the use of the programmed reading series APRENDIENDO A LEER. This series meets the project criteria of being presequenced--it is programmed with an answer column which the child uses to check his/her answers. Children can work in the materials at their own pace, so that one teacher can handle a small group all working at a different point in the curriculum sequence.

The project has completed a mastery test series for five books of APPRENDIENDO A LEER (there are 10 in the series and tests for the others are being developed). The training series for the teaching of the Primer and the programmed reading has been revised so that the training row encompasses both the Spanish and the English reading program.

Base line data are being collected which will provide local norms which will be the basis for evaluation of the Spanish reading program.

The project also put into use a completely revised Pre-DISTAR series. This provides an oral language approach (in Spanish and English) which starts with children making pointing responses, then leads them to one- and two-word responses. Some of the lessons use real objects, with the children then moving into use of pictures. The purpose of this series is to provide

the attending and responding skills for the very young children, not yet able to make whole sentence responses which are required in the regular DISTAR materials.

The project-developed Pre-Math lessons developed a year ago have been field tested and some revision of this curriculum is in progress. Overall results with the Pre-Math curriculum have been good. Test results indicate math is the project's most powerful program.

Training Component

The most significant progress in the training component has been the introduction of monitoring units in each curriculum area. The project has had training units for each subject. However, once these were passed no further training or checking on teaching skills was given to the teacher on that curriculum except on an informal trouble-shooting basis. The monitoring units provide the basis for regular checking on the maintenance of teaching skills. Each has a criteria for passing. If a monitoring unit is failed, the trainer does selective review of the teaching skills. The monitoring review is then given again.

Monitoring reviews count in the regular in-service training program (three monitoring units passed equals one regular training unit) and three units of training completed earns a raise. Since a number of teachers have stayed with the program long enough to have completed most of the training units offered, having a system that rewards the maintenance of teaching skills was needed. Training staff generally feel the monitoring has been a significant improvement in the overall training program.

Community-Parent Involvement Component

The project system of payments to the parent groups for volunteer services has given each parent advisory group money to spend as the parents choose. The Grulla site has been hoarding its money for a number of years toward the goal of remodeling an old school they hoped to obtain to provide classrooms and space

for a number of related services. This fall negotiations began in earnest for the old school--too late. Since its abandonment by the district it had suffered from vandalism, and one night burned to the ground.

A separate building which had housed a band room remained standing. The parent group has been negotiating for this room, and would plan to build an addition to it with their money (and other money promised by Texas Migrant Council). These negotiations are in progress.

At Connell a project application submitted last year was granted and a new mobile facility constructed over the fall months. The parent group is now much involved in projects to equip the facility as well as providing landscaping and outdoor play areas.

The individual parent visits for program review and evaluation initiated last year at the Grulla site are being repeated this year. These involve visits in the homes of parents where description of the program is done. When the parent visits they are oriented to each subject we teach, and then participate in the educational program as well as observing all parts of it. The visit is concluded with completion of a written program evaluation. These visits are now underway in Texas.

Materials Development Component

The three goals in this component called for publication of the training unit for Spanish reading (which has been accomplished), publication of the achievement tests for Spanish reading (which are half done), and publication of two or more dissemination products to send out to people inquiring about the project (two brochures have been published and several hundred copies have by now been distributed).

With funding as a developer/demonstration site it was possible to employ a bilingual editor to work on materials development so that a great many other project products have been made dissmination ready.

The most significant accomplishment was revision of the field test materials developed by the project for teaching of oral Spanish, a Spanish edition of the DISTAR Language lessons (Level One). There are 160 lessons in this series (10 volumes of teacher presentation books). Until this year this project has had the right to use and field test these materials but not to distribute them to other projects. Extensive negotiation with SRA (the copyright holder) resulted in granting of a licensing agreement under which the project is now free to sell the materials (at cost) to other school districts that would like to use them. This agreement took effect January 1, 1978. Since that time three school districts have contacted us and this curriculum is now in use at Uvalde, Texas; Roseville, California; and Carlsbad, California.

Management Component

The most significant effort this year by program administrative and training staff has been in dissemination of the program. In August the U.S. Office of Education notified us that this was one of 21 educational programs selected for a national effort to disseminate effective educational practices to schools receiving Title I or Title I Migrant funding.

Staff attended two planning meetings held during the fall in Washington, DC and New Orleans. A slide presentation was developed giving a project overview. A set of overhead transparencies was made up detailing the project components and some of the test results related to the different curricula. Two levels of "awareness" materials were printed up. The Educational Director, Rafael Guerra, and the Texas Resource Trainer, C. N. Robinson, did a two-man presentation (three times per conference) at a series of five national conferences held approximately every two weeks all fall. These conferences were held at Silver Springs, Maryland; Atlanta, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; Dallas, Texas; and San Francisco, California. Similar presentations were made at state conferences in Spokane and Seattle, Washington and at Boise, Idaho, by the Washington Resource Trainer.

During the course of these presentations our Educational Director was told that this program was also to be featured in a special "White House Report."

Preparation for these meetings and making these presentations has resulted in a real work overload for all project staff. However, it has focused a good deal of favorable attention on what can be accomplished with an effective use of bilingual education. Progress toward further program adoptions will be reported in the final evaluation.

Summary

At mid-year it appears that the project will be meeting most of its program objectives. The most significant efforts in reference to each component have been described in the narrative above.